

Dear Friends,

Greetings on this Snowy Monday morning, Feb. 1. I hope and pray you are well, safe and warm, and checking on your friends and neighbors in need.

This past weekend we "kicked off" this year's annual appeal for the Archdiocese. Every year, as you know, the Archdiocese asks all parishioners in every parish to participate in the works of charity. Imagine if you will the corporal works of mercy and all of those great needs that the annual appeal seeks to address.

Before I share some of the data for the appeal I'll try to answer some questions that have been presented to me since my arrival. Believe it or not I'm still a new pastor. Even more so because several months after beginning my pastorate we shut down and quarantined and haven't fully recovered from that up to now.

1- the monthly annual second collection for the Archdiocesan assessments is not the same as the annual appeal. Each parish is assessed based on their regular income to help support the workings and running of the chancery or Archdiocesan center. Not every parish has a assessment collection but every parish is expected to pay their assessments. Our assessment for this year is \$176,000. This amount must be paid to Newark whether or not it comes in through the collection. The Archdiocesan assessments help the parishes in their day to day business and spiritual management. Parishes don't pay for legal advice, building and property advice, help support and formation for lay pastoral positions such as youth and faith formation, and catholic education. Just to name a few. That's the long story short!

2- The annual appeal contributes toward the charitable works of the archdiocese, again think of the corporal works of mercy. The appeal feeds the poor, consoles the broken hearted, addressed addictions, visits the incarcerated, etc... It's all in the case study you can easily find.

3- Many parishioners have asked me why I instituted more collections each month. Please know that I have not! This is very important! Each month the United States Catholic Conference asks parishes to support one charity each month; retirement fund for religious, communication God's word, the black and Indian missions, etc.... These monthly collections have been part of St. A's for decades. The only difference I made was to announce it and actually take up the second collection when it's expected. Pre covid the ushers passed the basket a second time and now we have the second basket in front of the altar for those needs. No extra collections were added since my arrival.

4- Each and every Sunday we have our regular offertory collection, this is the only means by which we survive outside of extra donations and bequests. Each month there is the taking of one of the national special collections and once each month there is the assessments collections. This has been our practice for decades! The only change is taking the second collections more seriously and making it easier for you to participate.

Hope this helps!!!

Back to the annual appeal: There is a change this year in the collection of the annual appeal. Each parish is expected to guarantee the goal whether or not the full amount is collected. This presents a huge challenge for us because I've worked so hard to keep us from deficit spending and if we don't reach our goal amount we will have to dip into our savings. But I hope you think about making a contribution to the appeal not out of fear and burden but by blessing! This does give us an opportunity to share God's blessing with the blessings God has first given us.

Our goal amount this year is \$52, 822

In 2019 74 donors pledged \$27, 865 with \$27, 850 received.

In 2020 the goal was \$54,431.00. 89 donors pledged \$50,339 with \$47, 348 received.

74 donors in 2019. 89 in 2020. This is out of about 1,100 registered households. (we are still working on an accurate and update census)

While I'm course hoping to reach and exceed our goal this year I'm more importantly hoping to increase the number of donors which as you see is very low.

More to follow next week. Stay tuned!

Peace, blessings and fraternal regards,

Rev. Joseph A. D'Amico